

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 04165 01 OF 02 241128Z
ACTION SS-25

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AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
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AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 4165

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, PINS, PINT, UN, LE, US
SUBJ: LEONARD VISIT TO LEBANON

1. IN THE COURSE OF JULY 21-23 VISIT TO LEBANON, AMBASSADOR LEONARD CALLED SUCCESSIVELY ON FONMIN BOUTROS, PRESIDENT SARKIS AND PRIME MINISTER AL-HOSS. AMBASSADOR PARKER AND FSO HOWELL ACCOMPANIED AT FIRST TWO MEETINGS. BECAUSE, HOWEVER, OF TENSE SECURITY SITUATION BETWEEN RESIDENCE AND AL-HOSS HOME AT DOHA, PARKER DID NOT ATTEND JULY 23 MEETING WITH AL-HOSS.

2. WITH ALL THREE LEBANESE OFFICIALS, PRIMARY TOPIC OF LEONARD'S CONVERSATION WAS SITUATION IN SOUTH LEBANON AS IT RELATES TO UN ACTIVITIES AND CONSIDERATION OF UNIFIL MANDATE RENEWAL. LEONARD TOOK OCCASION TO CALL ATTENTION TO PASSAGE OF MORE THAN FOUR MONTHS OF ORIGINAL UNIFIL MANDATE UNDER UNSC RESOLUTION 425 AND TO HIGHLIGHT NECESSITY TO LOOK AHEAD TO UNIFIL RENEWAL IN MID-SEPTEMBER. HE SAID USG HAS BEEN GENERALLY PLEASED WITH CREATION AND DEPLOYMENT OF UNIFIL AND PROGRESS TOWARD FULFILLING PROVISIONS OF 425. HE CALLED
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BEIRUT 04165 01 OF 02 241128Z

ATTENTION, HOWEVER, TO TWO PROBLEMS WHICH WILL AFFECT PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES OF TROOP CONTRIBUTOR STATES AND THE ARAB BLOC AS UN CONSIDERATION OF RENEWAL APPROACHES OVER THE COMING WEEKS.

3. LEONARD SAID THAT THE FIRST AREA IN WHICH WE WILL NEED VISIBLE PROGRESS IN ADVANCE OF THE UNSC DEBATE IS THE DEPLOY-

MENT OF AT LEAST SYMBOLIC UNITS (I.E., SEVERAL HUNDRED TROOPS) OF THE LEBANESE ARMY (LAF) TO THE SOUTH. WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING THE MANY POLITICAL AND PRACTICAL DIFFICULTIES ASSOCIATED WITH THIS MOVE, LEONARD SAID THAT LARGE NUMBERS ARE NOT CRUCIAL INITIALLY, NOT IS IT NECESSARY FOR THE LAF TO ENTER EVERY VILLAGE IN THE SOUTH; WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS FOR THE LEBANESE FLAG TO BE SEEN IN THE SOUTH IN CONJUNCTION WITH THAT OF THE UN.

4. THE SECOND IMPORTANT QUESTION ON WHICH LEONARD TOUCHED WAS THAT OF EFFECTIVE UNIFIL DEPLOYMENT THROUGHOUT ITS AREA OF OPERATIONS, INCLUDING THE MARONITE ENCLAVES. HE SAID THAT UNIFIL IS WORKING TO GAIN THE CONFIDENCE OF THE LOCAL INHABITANTS AND WAS MAKING SOME PROGRESS IN SPREADING ITS OUTPOSTS, BUT THAT IT IS IMPORTANT TO THE TROOP CONTRIBUTORS, THE ARAB STATES AND THE THIRD WORLD REPRESENTATIVES FOR UNIFIL TO BE PERCEIVED AS CARRYING OUT ITS MANDATE ON AN EVEN-HANDED BASIS. IF WE DO NOT HAVE DEMONSTRABLE PROGRESS IN BOTH THESE AREAS BEFORE THE UNSC CONSIDERATION OF RENEWAL, LEONARD CONCLUDED, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT WE WILL NOT REPEAT NOT BE ABLE TO OBTAIN THE RENEWAL WHICH IS IN THE INTEREST OF ALL CONCERNED PARTIES.

5. BOUTROS, AS DID HIS COLLEAGUES IN SUBSEQUENT CONVERSATIONS, EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR THE ROLE OF THE USG IN THE ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF 425 AND A REALIZATION OF THE IMPORT-
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 BEIRUT 04165 01 OF 02 241128Z

ANCE OF THE PROBLEMS LEONARD OUTLINED. BOUTROS CONFIRMED REPORT WE HAD ALREADY RECEIVED FROM LEBANESE UN PERMREP TUENI (BEIRUT 4138) THAT DISCUSSIONS WITHIN GOL AND WITH SYRIANS WERE UNDERWAY TO PERMIT DEPLOYMENT OF LAF FORCES TO THE SOUTH IN THE NEAR FUTURE. HE ASKED THAT LEONARD IMPRESS UPON SARKIS THE NEXT DAY (JULY 22) THE SAME POINTS HE HAD MADE TO BOUTROS. BOUTROS RAISED THE COMPLICATIONS FOR THE GOL ASSOCIATED WITH THE LAF MOVE SOUTH, STATING THAT EVENTUALLY THE GOL FORCES WOULD HAVE TO TAKE CONTROL OF THE BORDER, INCLUDING THE "GOOD FENCE." HE SAID, HOWEVER, THAT DECISIONS HAD BEEN TAKEN AS TO THE MANNER IN WHICH HADDAD AND SHIDIAC WOULD BE HANDLED, INCLUDING FINANCIAL INDUCEMENTS FOR THEM TO ADOPT A NEW CAREER WITHOUT EITHER PUNISHMENT OR REWARD WITHIN THE LAF. AS REGARDS THE "GOOD FENCE," BOUTROS ENVISAGED A PHASED LAF DEPLOYMENT WHICH WOULD NOT NECESSITATE THE GOL DEALING WITH THE QUESTION IN THE NEAR TERM BUT LEFT NO DOUBT THAT ANY LEBANESE GOVERNMENT WOULD EVENTUALLY HAVE TO DOPE WITH THE PROBLEM AND ASSERT ITS SOVERIGN RIGHT TO CONTROL ITS BORDERS. HE ASKED THAT THE USG NOT REPEAT NOT RAISE THE FENCE WITH THE ISRAELIS AT THIS TIME, BUT URGED THAT THE USG CONTINUE TO EXERT ITS INFLUENCE ON THE GOI REGARDING UNIFIL DEPLOYMENT TO THE SOUTHERN ENCLAVES AND RESTRAIN ISRAEL FROM

COMPLICATING GOL DIFFICULTIES IN BEIRUT THROUGH ISRAEL'S
POLITICAL AND SUPPLY RELATIONSHIPS WITH MARONITE MILITIA
LEADERS.

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 04165 02 OF 02 241120Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BEIRUT 4165

EXDIS

6. IN JULY 22 MEETING WITH SARKIS, HE REITERATED REHEARSED
DIFFICULTIES WITH CREATION OF NATIONAL ARMY BUT SAID PLANS
WERE GOING AHEAD FOR SENDING SEVERAL HUNDRED TROOPS
SOUTH "WITHIN DAYS." IN THAT CONNECTION, HE SAID, A
MEETING BETWEEN LAF OFFICERS AND SYRIAN OFFICERS OF THE
ADF WAS BEING HELD AT YARZE SAME MORNING TO DISCUSS
PROBLEMS RELATED TO OPENING A CORRIDOR IN THE BEKAA
FOR THE INSERTION OF LAF FORCES. SARKIS ASSERTED THAT
THERE HAD BEEN A RECENT INCREASE IN THE RATE OF PLO
INFILTRATION INTO THE UNIFIL AREA AND THAT THIS FACTOR
COULD COMPLICATE THE GOL TASK (UNIFIL SOURCES DID NOT
REPEAT NOT CONFIRM SUCH A DEVELOPMENT IN THEIR BRIEFINGS
IN NAQURA FOR LEONARD AND HOWELL LATER THAT DAY).

7. NEVERTHELESS, SARKIS SAID THAT ONCE THE PROBLEMS OF
THE LAF ROUTE OF MARCH ARE RESOLVED WITH THE SYRIANS,
OTHER DIFFICULTIES WOULD NOT IMPEDE THEIR DEPLOYMENT.
HE APPEARED REASONABLY CONFIDENT THAT PLANS FOR THIS
DEPLOYMENT ARE PROCEEDING WELL AND CONFIRMED THAT A
SCHEME FOR HANDLING THE HADDAD ISSUE ALONG THE LINES
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PAGE 02 BEIRUT 04165 02 OF 02 241120Z

SUGGESTED BY BOUTROS HAD BEEN AGREED UPON. SARKIS ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT HE IS HAMPERED IN HIS EFFORTS TO BUILD RESPECT FOR THE ARMY BY CRITICISM AND SLOGANEERING BY SOME LEBANESE ELEMENTS, PARTICULARLY AMONG THE MUSLIMS. PARKER AGREED WITH SARKIS THAT KHOURY HAD MADE PROGRESS UNDER EXTREMELY DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES, BUT SAID PROBLEM WAS PERCEIVED TO BE IN CONFESSONAL MAKE-UP OF GENERAL STAFF. FURTHERMORE, PARKER SUGGESTED LEBANES POPULATION DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE AWARE OF PROGRESS THAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED AND LAF MIGHT DO WELL TO IMPROVE ITS INFORMATION CAMPAIGN. SARKIS' RESPONSE WAS DEFENSIVE AND EMOTIONAL, STRESSING THE NEED FOR EQUILIBRIUM IN THE LAF AND PUBLIC CONFIDENCE BUT REJECTING THE IDEA THAT HE SHOULD ENGAGE IN A PROPAGANDA EFFORT TO PUBLICIZE PROGRESS. HE SEEMED TO BE POINTING TO THE PRIME MINISTER AS FAILING TO PLAY HIS KEY ROLE IN THIS TASK.

8. LEONARD AND HOWELL SAW PRIMIN AL-HOSS AT HIS HOME MORNING ULY 23. AL-HOSS LISTENED CAREFULLY TO LEONARD'S REMARKS. HE SAID A MAJOR IMPEDIMENT TO LAF DEPLOYMENT TO THE SOUTH HAD BEEN THE INABILITY OF GOL AUTHORITIES TO AGREE AMONG THEMSELVES ON A PLAN FOR HANDLING THE HADDAD/SHIDIAC QUESTION, BUT THAT NOW AN ACCORD HAD BEEN REACHED. HE GAVE THE SAME IMPRESSION AS BOUTROS AND SARKIS OF RESERVED OPTIMISM THAT PLANS WERE PROCEEDING FOR LAF DEPLOYMENT AND ALSO CONCURRED THAT SOME INTERVAL WAS POSSIBLE BETWEEN THE ARRIVAL OF THE FIRST LAF FORCES AND THE TIME WHEN THEY WOULD HAVE TO DEAL DEFINITELY WITH THE QUESTION OF THE MARONITE MILITIAS AND OTHER QUESTIONS OF LEBANESE SOVEREIGNTY (HE DID NOT SPECIFICALLY MENTION THE QUESTION OF THE "GOOD FENCE"). AL-HOSS SAID THAT THE MEETING WITH THE

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BEIRUT 04165 02 OF 02 241120Z

SYRIAN OFFICERS THE PREVIOUS DAY HAD REPORTEDLY GONE WELL AND THAT SARKIS HAD SCHEDULED A "WORK SESSION" ON JULY 24 WITH LAF AND ADF OFFICERS TO WORK OUT DETAILS OF FORCE SIZ AND COMPOSITION, LINE OF MARCH, ETC. STRESSING THAT HE WAS IN ONLY INFREQUENT CONTACT WITH THE SYRIANS, AL-HOSS SAID HE BELIEVED THE SYRIAN ATTITUDES TO A SOUTHWARD DEPLOYMENT WERE POSITIVE AND THAT HAFIZ AL-ASSAD HAD COMMITTED HIMSELF TO ASSISTING SARKIS AT LATAKIA SUMMIT. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE SYRIANS HAD BEEN DISPLEASED BY THE GOL'S FAILURE TO FOLLOW UP

QUICKLY AFTER SUMMIT.

9. COMMENT: NOT UNTYPICALLY, EACH OF THE OFFICIALS
ASKED THAT WE BE CERTAIN TO MAKE THE SAME POINTS TO THE
OTHERS. LEONARD INFORMED THEM THAT HE WOULD BE TALKING
IN THE NEXT SEVERAL DAYS WITH THE ISRAELIS TO OUTLINE
THE PROBLEMS HE RAISED TO THEM AND SEEKING THEIR
COOPERATION IN HELPING THE UNIFIL OPERATION TO SUCCEED.
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